Toronto metro

Your essential daily news MONDAY, MAY 29, 2017 High 22°C/Low 12°C Scattered thunderstorms

HOUSE OF CARDS
When real world politics are scarier than fiction
metroLIFE

Kristin Rankin, co-owner of Fuss Hair Studio in Leslieville.
EDUARDO LIMA/METRO

A SAFE SPACE WITH STYLE

Kristin Rankin is leading an international campaign to make salons more inclusive for trans people — and it's catching on
metroNEWS

Child's death spurs bike safety review

TRAGEDY

Report on most pressing risks expected in 'very short period'

City hall is undertaking an immediate safety review of Toronto's approximately 300-kilometre network of multi-use trails following the death last week of a boy riding his bike along Martin Goodman Trail.

The first order of business will be addressing pressing safety risks, including problems on the stretch of Lake Shore Boulevard W. where five-year-old Xavier Morgan died after falling from a bike path into traffic.

Safety advocates have said a simple guardrail could have saved the boy's life.

In an interview Sunday, Mayor John Tory said he wants to do everything possible to ensure no child or adult can fall onto a roadway from that trail.

"It's just not something that is an acceptable risk, and sometimes you learn the tragic way," he said.

Coun. Jaye Robinson, chair of the city's public works and infrastructure committee, will meet Monday with Toronto's general manager of transportation services to begin a review of trails throughout the city.

The aim will be both to make immediate changes to problem areas and to consider longer-term solutions that may require construction or even moving a trail that may be too close to a roadway.

Tory said the review will consider safety issues that arise when trails are adjacent to vehicle traffic, as well as paths where the danger might arise from a busy mix of cyclists, pedestrians, skateboarders, rollerbladers and more — particularly as the weather gets warmer and traffic increases.

Tory says he expects a report on the most pressing safety risks "within a very short period."

Xavier, called an "exuberant, loving and happy little boy" by his school principal, was with an adult Wednesday evening when he lost control, fell onto the roadway and was struck by a car.

Toronto police arrived at the site, near Lake Shore Boulevard W. and Jameson Avenue, at about 6:30 p.m. The driver of the vehicle remained at the scene.

Paramedics transported the boy to the Hospital for Sick Children, where he died.

Jared Kolb, with the not-for-profit advocacy group Cycle Toronto, said last week that he puts the blame for the death squarely on city infrastructure.

"I don't put blame on the driver, the parent or whoever was with the child," Kolb said.

A memorial bike ride in Xavier's honour, organized by the group Advocacy for Respect for Cyclists, is planned Saturday, June 3 at 10 a.m., beginning at Spadina Avenue and Bloor Street W.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

HOW TO HACK YOUR COMMUTE
Metro's resident cyclist has five pointers for you on Bike To Work Day metroNEWS

An attitude adjustment can get you on the road

TRANSPORTATION

Here are five tips to help get you over your fear of cycling

Sarah-Joyce Battersby
Metro | Toronto

I'm not going to sugarcoat it: Cycling in a city can be scary. Ultimately, you are a soft bag of flesh on a few sticks of steel among delivery trucks, potholes and streetcar tracks. We've seen the tragedies, including just last week when a five-year-old boy was killed. Infrastructure has a long way to go to make cycling safer and more inviting.

But an attitude adjustment can help. Monday's Bike to Work Day will see hundreds of cyclists, including Mayor John Tory, take to the streets on two wheels to celebrate and promote biking as a mode of transportation. If you've toyed with the idea but something holds you back, I am here to say: Just try it. You will surprise yourself. You will get better at it. And you will love it. Here are my tips for overcoming some common excuses.

TAKE PART

What keeps you from biking to work? Ask Metro's resident cyclist how to hack your commute. **Email questions or concerns to sjbattersby@metronews.ca**

Metro writer/cyclist Sarah-Joyce Battersby on Sunday. Hundreds of commuters — including Mayor John Tory — will be cycling to work this morning to mark Bike To Work Day. The occasion is intended to celebrate cycling and to promote it as a viable mode of transportation across the city. EDUARDO LIMA/METRO

Weathering the storms
No matter how you travel to work, providing you leave your home at all, you will be exposed to the elements. You're already doing it! Good for you. Now take your basic understanding of how to combat rain, snow and cold and extend it. Wear layers in the winter (gloves are an absolute must) and rain gear when it's wet. Also, bring a change of clothes.

Work clothes ≠ bike clothes
Accept the fact that most days require a change of clothes, which by extension means a backpack (a basket will do, too). Pants wear out in saddle-shaped patterns, pencil skirts don't fit over crossbars comfortably and high heels slide around on pedals (but are manageable in a pinch). Another option: stash a collection of finer work garments at the office, provided you have storage space.

Streetcar tracks
The horror stories of tires stuck in streetcar tracks are numerous and terrifying. But the time may come when you have to cross over the rails. Try practising a crossing (always on a wide angle) on a quieter stretch of street, so you will be ready if it happens mid-commute. If you're too nervous, take the time to map a route that doesn't put you alongside them.

Cars are scary
The worst thing for your safety is not being seen. So embrace your '90s style icons and go neon. My winter jacket is black, but my backpack practically glows it's so bright. Same with my gloves. Cover yourself in lights and reflectors. And if you have to, take up space in the lane. Don't shrink into the curb just to be polite. Biking is about being loud and proud — and alive.

Toronto is a long, gentle slope
I can't really help you here, other than to say get a bike with gears. I ride a fixed-gear for its overall simplicity, but that means when I face a hill, I have to stand up and power through. Do your best. It will get easier the more you try. And if you truly can't muster the strength, just hop off your bike and walk up the sidewalk.

MENTAL HEALTH

Demand rising for youth aid

At age 18, Kimberly could no longer come up with a reason to live. The Toronto university student locked the door to her parents' garage, stepped onto a stool in the middle of the room and looped an electrical cord around her neck.

"It's something I couldn't explain," recalls Kimberly, who asked that her last name not be published. "I didn't understand what was going on in my head . . . You want to give up."

Within seconds, she heard a faint scratching on the garage door. It was her cat.

"He knew something was wrong," she says. "I took the cord that I wrapped around my neck off and I went inside."

Two years later, the now third-year student at Ryerson University has been diagnosed with anxiety disorder and depression.

She's part of what some experts are calling an emerging phenomenon.

Unprecedented demand for mental health services among young people today is raising alarm among medical experts and transforming the financial plans of universities, businesses and governments, a Torstar News Service/Ryerson School of Journalism investigation has found.

"We have lineups out the door and down the hall," said McMaster University psychiatrist Dr. Catharine Munn. "Despite hiring more counsellors, we're drowning."

This month, data from the Canadian Institute for Health Information reported emergency department visits by children and youth from 5 to 24 seeking mental health or substance abuse treatment rose 63 per cent and hospitalizations jumped 67 per cent between 2006 and 2016.

The reasons behind the surge in mental health demand remain a matter of debate within the medical community.

"No one knows exactly what's going on," said Dr. Glenda MacQueen, a professor of psychiatry and vice-dean of the University of Calgary's medical school. "Youth today are under more pressure than ever before."

In interviews with a dozen leading experts across the country, several issues were identified.

The competitive job market means that a university degree is no guarantee of a career.

Changes in parenting styles, where parents do more for their children than generations past, can leave youth ill-prepared.

Societal changes in how we communicate — via social media in the world of 24/7 Internet — can also lead to new pressures not faced by previous generations, say experts.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

Can the selection of Andrew Scheer woo the youth vote from the Liberals? **Canada**

Money is not the problem

Matt Elliott
Tory's Toronto

Here's the good news: Following a vote last week by city council, the relief line subway — the Toronto transit project long championed by actual experts — is now closer to becoming a reality than ever before.

Here's the bad news: It's still at least 14 years away.

Yeah, yeah, I know. That's hard to accept. Fourteen years is a ridiculously long time to wait for a vital piece of transit infrastructure. Try not to think about how old you'll be by then.

But waiting is all we can do. Planners say this subway line, which would run underground along Queen Street East from downtown before turning up Carlaw Avenue and connecting to Pape Station, is the only surefire way to reduce crowding on the city's subway system.

And yet even following council's overwhelming 42-1 vote last week in favour of moving forward with planning and design for the project, no one has offered a credible plan for opening the subway before 2031. By then, of course, crowding will be even worse.

The downtown relief line is still at least 14 years away. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

Since we've got at least 14 years to kill, we might as well take the time to reflect on this, and ask the big question: How the hell did things get this bad?

How did transportation infrastructure first identified as a priority and a necessity more than 100 years ago keep getting pushed back again and again?

A lot of people will tell you the reason is money. And yeah, the relief line subway, like all subways, is expensive, an estimated $6.8 billion.

But it's worth noting that throughout the decades they've spent balking at the billions needed for the relief line, politicians at all levels have spent or pledged to spend billions on other transportation projects.

Let's list a few. There's the low-ridership Sheppard subway. There's a subway extension to Vaughan. There's the heavily subsidized train to the airport. There are LRT plans that all connect to an already-jammed subway system. There are dozens of projects to widen provincial highways. There's the plan to spend a billion dollars to maintain the least-used part of the Gardiner Expressway.

Oh, and don't forget the multi-billion, one-stop subway extension to Scarborough.

No, the real problem with transit planning in Toronto has never been about money. It's always been about priorities.

Instead of prioritizing ridership and network demands, support for transit projects has long been decided based on which projects are best positioned to help win votes. Stacked up against projects seeking to bring subways and rail to large suburban areas, the relief line — running through just a couple of ridings and a handful of municipal wards — never stood much of a chance.

And despite council's vote of support for the relief line last week, there's little sign of that fundamentally changing. The provincial government — yet to confirm its share of funding for the relief line — is now chasing big, high-price plans for high-speed rail, while mayors from municipalities north of Toronto were successful in keeping hope alive for a subway extension into Richmond Hill.

And that's the worst news of all. Even with jam-packed subway platforms offering daily evidence that Toronto's transit priorities have been dangerously misaligned, we keep making the same mistakes.

Toronto DIGEST

Man arrested after taking ambulance for joy ride

A 29-year-old man has been taken into custody after he stole an empty ambulance in Cambridge and went on an "erratic" joy ride across the GTA early Sunday morning.

After a lengthy pursuit, Ontario Provincial Police officers decided to deploy a spike belt in the area of Rainbow Valley Road West on Highway 26 and successfully stopped the ambulance, police said.

The suspect travelled 190 kilometres through the GTA. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Halton officer charged in drug exhibits tampering

The former head of Halton's police drug squad has been charged with allegations of tampering with dozens of drug exhibits stored in an evidence vault.

Brad Murray, a staff sergeant with 16 years on the Halton force, was arrested on Sunday after a seven-month-long internal and external investigation by Toronto police of the drug vault evidence.

Murray is charged with obstruction of justice and two counts each of theft under $5,000 and breach of trust.

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EDUCATION

Alumni bid farewell to Vaughan Road

Vaughan Road Academy closes its doors June 30.
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Hundreds of current and former high schoolers wandered the halls of Vaughan Road Academy on Saturday to say goodbye to the institution that will be closing next month after nine decades.

Some talked about meeting the loves of their lives in those halls. Others shrieked in excitement, as they recognized their former classmates. One former student remembered the horrid blue rompers she had to wear during gym class. Another felt anxious as she recalled how divided between programs the place seemed to her when she was there.

Last December, Toronto District School Board trustees voted to close the school at 529 Vaughan Rd. (that was previously known as Vaughan Road Collegiate Institute) — perhaps best known as the school Drake once went to — citing decades of dropping enrolment. At the time that decision was made, the high school was at 20 per cent of its capacity with just over 200 students.

Since news of the school's impending closure was made official, a group of volunteers have been busy making sure it wasn't going to go out without a party.

Saturday's gathering saw classrooms around the school designated for each generation (featuring decade-appropriate music and photos to match) of the school's near century-long existence.

The school's last day is June 30.

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Musician Taylor Knox enjoys Little Portugal for its community and music venues, and has moved within the neighbourhood three times. EDUARDO LIMA/METRO

Community 'a hub' for musicians

COMMUNITY

Little Portugal declared best place in Canada for new artists

David Hains
Metro | Toronto

Toronto's Trinity/Little Portugal community has been declared Canada's best neighbourhood for new musicians. But residents worry that what's made it so attractive to young creative types is starting to price them out of the area.

The Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada (SOCAN) released a study this month that shows more new musicians live in the west-end neighbourhood than any other in the country.

"This diverse and culturally rich neighbourhood in Toronto's south-western quadrant is a hub of creative musical talent, live music venues and businesses using music to their advantage," SOCAN wrote in its release.

The west end did well overall, as Brockton/Parkdale Village/Exhibition Place, Christie and Dufferin/Dovercourt Village also ranked in the top 10.

Taylor Knox wasn't surprised by the analysis. The 32-year-old musician, who has worked with the likes of Owen Pallett and Hayden, has moved within Little Portugal three times.

"I really like it here," he told Metro, citing nearby venues like the Garrison, the Baby G and Smiling Buddha.

"All of my peers are living nearby," he said, adding it's nice to be able to run into them or check out a quick show.

But beyond the venues, Knox says housing affordability is really driving the trend.

"It's the most affordable rent that's still close to downtown," said Knox, who moved to Little Portugal because homes closer to other venues like the Horseshoe became too costly. He's now worried that Little Portugal will become too expensive as well.

While local councillor Ana Bailao was thrilled with the neighbourhood's recognition, she's concerned about affordability, too.

> **"It's the most affordable rent that's still close to downtown."**
> Taylor Knox

"We don't want to lose what made this community so great," she said. However, she added that neighbourhoods never remain stagnant, and it's important to find a balance.

It's a concern that's been weighing on Phill Mendonca-Vieira's mind. The 29-year-old recognizes that he is both gentrifying the neighbourhood and being affected by that gentrification.

The Portuguese software engineer says Little Portugal is experiencing its "last gasp as an ethnic enclave" and feels he's losing a sense of intimacy with his neighbourhood because of it.

Mendonca-Vieira, who co-organized a panel on housing affordability in March, says his own apartment just sold for $1.8 million.

"I might have to move to Parkdale," he said.

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EDUCATION

All city staff to get Indigenous training

It may soon be back-to-school time for Toronto's public servants.

In its ongoing quest to fulfill the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, the city is planning to introduce Indigenous cultural competency training for its entire staff.

The training is a response to a recommendation from the report that asks governments — federal, provincial, territorial and municipal — to educate public servants on Indigenous history.

Some cities, like Mississauga, have already started implementing such programs.

Coun. Mary-Margaret McMahon, who successfully introduced a motion on the issue at council last week, said the city is "way behind" on implementing the recommendations.

"This is about making council members and their staff more mindful of our own history and more inclusive of Indigenous people," she said.

The training is expected to strengthen relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations across the city. Through education, city staff will gain the "cultural competence" needed to fully engage with urban Indigenous groups to provide better services in their communities.

The city's Aboriginal Affairs Committee will collaborate with the office of Equity, Diversity and Human Rights to assess the needs for implementation. A report on the process is expected back in September.

Mayor John Tory recently hired an Indigenous Affairs officer — Lindsay Kretschmer — whose job is to liaise with Indigenous communities and provide policy and strategic advice to the city.

McMahon said some individual councillors are working with advisors in implementing the city's Indigenous employment and education strategy.

"Incorporating Indigenous heritage or cultural awareness into our city projects would be enormously helpful," she said. "We need to get going on putting those reconciliation calls into practice."

GILBERT NGABO/METRO

Haircut liberation

STYLE

30 salons so far have signed up for safe-space venue idea

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto

Wesley Welch has always appreciated a shorter, more masculine haircut. But he couldn't always get one.

"Whenever I went to a barbershop, they'd turn me away, like, 'shouldn't you be in a salon for long hair?'" said the Bolton resident, remembering the time before his transition.

"It felt like a rejection. It makes you feel like you don't fit in and you don't have respect as a trans individual in this gendered society," he added.

It's a problem all too common among gender non-conforming people — but one that Welch and others don't have to put up with anymore, thanks to Fuss Hair Studio in Leslieville. The salon is one of few places that offer gender-neutral hairstyle services.

Kristin Rankin, co-owner of Fuss Hair Studio, is leading a campaign to make salons more inclusive, safe and welcoming for LGBTQ community members. EDUARDO LIMA/METRO

"It was utterly liberating to get a haircut that reflected how I felt inside," said Welch, who makes the trip from Bolton monthly to get a haircut in a friendly environment.

> **"Your haircut is your visual identity."**
> Kristin Rankin

Stories like Welch's are what inspired Fuss co-owner Kristin Rankin to expand safe spaces in the hair industry. Her new campaign, The Dress Code Project, enlists other hair salons to embrace a spirit of diversity and acceptance.

In partnership with groups that support transgender youth, the campaign offers inclusion training to people in the hair industry. As many as 30 salons have already signed up, some as far away as Baltimore and North Carolina. Each one gets a safe-space sticker.

Rankin said the important thing is to know how to address a client as a person first, not necessarily as a man or woman.

"Your haircut is your visual identity," she said. "It's about giving clients a hairstyle that fits their needs, and nothing else."

PRIDE

Pastor to retire as service loses stage

For more than two decades, Reverend Brent Hawkes has led a church service on the morning of Toronto's Pride Parade.

"It's been a great experience for us down through the years," Hawkes said.

The pastor and longtime LGBTQ activist is due to retire from the Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto at the end of the year. This was to be his last Faith + Pride service.

But a mix-up between Pride Toronto and the MCCT has lost this year's Faith + Pride service its stage, in favour of several other acts, and sparked outrage from some members of both the church and the broader LGBTQ community who consider the mix-up a slight.

Pride Toronto said it's trying to work out a new deal with the church so that Faith + Pride goes ahead as planned.

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Moment of youth for Tories

LEADERSHIP RACE

Can Andrew Scheer lure young voters from Liberals?

Ryan Tumilty
Metro | Ottawa

With Andrew Scheer, the Conservative Party picked the youngest leadership choice available this past weekend, but it's unclear whether that will be enough to attract key younger voters.

At 38, Scheer is younger than Prime Minister Justin Trudeau or current NDP Leader Tom Mulcair.

The Conservatives lost in 2015, not because their core support left them but because a new crop of 18- to 34-year-old voters turned out to support Justin Trudeau.

Quito Maggi, president of Mainstreet Research, polled extensively on the race. He said even though Scheer is younger he's unlikely to tap into the youth vote.

"Despite Andrew Scheer's appearance and age they picked the wrong candidate to appeal to millennials," said Maggi. He said Scheer's social conservatism — even if he is committing not to legislate on it — is going to be a tough sell for younger voters.

Andrew Scheer, the new leader of the Conservative Party of Canada. GETTY IMAGES

DIGEST

MANCHESTER

Britain remains on alert

British police made two more arrests and stormed three more locations Sunday as they hunted for suspects in the Manchester bombing, while a government minister said members of attacker Salman Abedi's network may still be at large. Police said two men were arrested in the city on suspicion of terrorist offences. 11 other men were in also custody. AP

WHITE HOUSE

Trump eyes staff overhaul

President Donald Trump is considering overhauling his White House staff and bringing back top campaign strategists, frustrated by what he views as his team's inability to contain the crisis involving alleged Russian meddling in the election. Teams of lawyers and experienced public relations hands are being recruited to deal with revelations about Moscow's interference and possible improper dealings with the Trump campaign and associates. AP

PHILIPPINES

Situation in Marawi dire

Philippine forces found corpses in the streets of a besieged southern city on Sunday, including at least eight civilians who appeared to have been executed, as soldiers battled a weakened but still forceful group of militants linked to Daesh. The death toll from six days of fighting neared 100.

The crisis in Marawi has grown dire as the militants fend off a military that has unleashed attack helicopters, armoured vehicles and scores of soldiers. AP

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PHILOSOPHER CAT by Jason Logan

URBAN ETIQUETTE ELLEN VANSTONE

THE QUESTION
Do I really have to use preferred pronouns?

Dear Ellen,

My 22-year-old son has a friend who looks and sounds female to me, but he says she is "non-binary," meaning not male or female. I'm supposed to call her "they" or "them." I try, but I find it very confusing and often forget to use the correct pronoun, which makes my son furious. He says I'm being rude and insulting, but isn't it a bit rude to expect me to change how I talk to accommodate someone else's radical views?

Confused Mom

Dear Confused Mom,

Wowza, ma'am. You have opened a giant tinderbox here, but it's a good one, and increasingly relevant, so let's discuss.

First, consider a similar language issue from another era. Before the term Ms. came in, men were identified as Mr., regardless of marital status, while women were identified as Mrs. or Miss. In other words, with a simple honorific, society instantly divided women into married (off limits, i.e., sexually unavailable) or single (sexually available if young, or proven sexual reject if older).

Many chauvinists (male and female) fought the use of Ms., suspecting (correctly) that it threatened the patriarchal status quo by chipping away at how female humans overall are seen and defined. But in terms of etiquette, the rules are on the side of Ms. — that is, if you believe etiquette means treating all human beings as equal (which it does). Simply put, all humans are equally entitled to keep their marital status private in public and on paper. So the use of Ms. has rightly prevailed, and we should all use it, unless a woman insists on being called Mrs., in which case one should politely respect her wishes to be so identified.

Your non-binary pronoun question is complex, but similar. The request feels unreasonable because it doesn't make sense to people who grew up thinking the world was male or female, period. It helps if you try to understand that "being" male or female, or neither, is not a choice or a "radical political view." It's a real feeling, rooted in a sense of personal identity.

But whether you understand this or not, or like it or not, the right thing to do is respect your son's friend's request and make an effort to use the neutral pronoun.

Don't worry if you make mistakes — as long as you proceed in good faith and make an honest effort, they can be politely patient with, and appreciative of, broad-minded you.

Need advice?
Email Ellen:
askellen@metronews.ca

With reality-TV flair, Tories choose 'nice guy'

Vicky Mochama
Metro | Toronto

Poised to pick a bombastic-yet-unknowing TV businessman then finding a contender in a Quebec libertarian, the Conservative Party of Canada picked a man who definitely has a Wikipedia page.

The Saturday night selection of Andrew Scheer was done with a dramatic panache worthy of some of the best reality television producers. It is a nail-biting style that, let's be honest, I did not think the Conservatives had.

Polls closed at 4 p.m., but the party didn't announce a leader until the evening.

This could be thanks in part to the fairly technical voting process, involving ranked ballots and a points system.

Back in 2004, they had to figure out all this by hand, but this year the process was automated.

In all likelihood, the computer had already done the math by 4:30 p.m., and was onto planning world domination by the time the Conservatives crowned Scheer.

But why squander the chance to own the airwaves? And why not become a trending topic on social media where I, a millennial without cable, could follow along as people united to hate on Kevin O'Leary?

The producers of America's Next Top Model, The Bachelor, Project Runway and other fine fare couldn't have done better. It would only have been more delightful if, in his acceptance speech, Scheer announced he wasn't here to make friends.

In round after round, Maxime Bernier led the ballots until the very last one when Scheer *juuust* outscored him.

In many ways, it reminded me of the first season of Paradise Hotel when after a season of mostly being ahead, Dave, an affable man, was screwed over by his partner, Charla, a "nice girl" with the heart of a super villain.

Sure, the nice guy won on Saturday, but at what cost?

For most Canadians, Scheer is not well known. A field of 14 candidates during an unruly time did not help. As the country heads towards the 2019 election, the stakes are high: modest overall economic growth is being challenged by a recession affecting Calgary and Edmonton, and a heated housing market in Toronto and Vancouver —while internationally, an overgrown infant threatens the stability of global peace.

The party managed a couple hours of drama. Now they'll have to produce several seasons of the Scheer Show.

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Sweden's Ruben Ostlund wins top award at Cannes for his satire The Square

Stranger than *fiction*

TELEVISION

Trump's reign renders House of Cards irrelevant

Tony Wong
life@metronews.ca

Spoiler alert: Story has details of previous seasons

Kevin Spacey and Robin Wright return for a fifth season of House of Cards. CONTRIBUTED

Frank Underwood is a killer.

We know this because the fictional president once shoved a reporter in front of a subway car. Finely and indulgently played by Kevin Spacey, Underwood is mercurial, cunning and the most dangerous man on television.

Yet current events have conspired to make the infamous fake president seem reductive and, improbably, smaller than life.

House of Cards returns for a fifth season, with Spacey and first lady Claire Underwood (Robin Wright) as the rulers of an alternate Camelot, a kind of sociopathic Bill and Hillary Clinton. At any other time this would be substantive, trippy entertainment. The darkness of the show played well during the seeming naïveté of an Obama administration.

And then came Donald Trump.

Spacey plays Underwood on TV like it was written by Shakespeare, a politician who plays three-dimensional chess when the other guys are playing hopscotch after a dozen beers.

The beauty of House of Cards was that it took you deep into the bowels of the West Wing, while our anti-hero president vanquished foes like a true Master of Whisperers. It sometimes took an entire season to pass a crucial piece of legislation using those dark arts. But the details were exquisite.

Now there is Trump. Suddenly it's apparent that you don't need experience, or smarts, or even a basic understanding of world affairs to be president. While Spacey's playbook is right out of Machiavelli's The Prince, Trump is absurdly cartoonish, his clumsy manoeuvres stolen from WrestleMania. That's not surprising, since the president sits in the WWE Hall of Fame.

With Trump we have learned that sophistry does not win you points. Or an election. Why be like Frank Underwood, delicately tap dancing through congress when the blunt instrument of an executive order is far more to the point?

With the fictional President Underwood, the devil is in the details. And he'll tell you so himself, as the new season returns to breaking the fifth wall. Underwood plays to the camera, gleefully relaying the mischief he's up to. You only wish he had a handlebar moustache to twirl when he's doing it.

Trump doesn't care about the fine print, and so far, despite stumbling past his first 100 days, he's still gamely hanging on, a wounded, angry creature. Underwood's southern charm is benign by comparison.

Like HBO's comedy Veep, about a narcissistic, over-the-top politician clinging to power played by Julia Louis-Dreyfus, House of Cards has been usurped by reality. It's hard to satirize a president who is satirizing himself.

Still, House of Cards has often veered into excess, sharing more DNA with Veep than All The President's Men as it careened from drama to black parody.

That seemed evident last season when the president decided to put his wife on the ticket as the vice-president. That sort of nepotism would be laughable — and arguably, it detracted from the realism of the show.

But then Trump put his daughter Ivanka in the White House and let his son-in-law Jared Kushner handle foreign affairs, all the while continuing to blatantly profit in his business from political connections while a special investigator decides whether his staff was colluding with Russians.

Rest in peace, House of Cards. You delivered a decent season with fine performances. But the world has, incomprehensibly, passed you by. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

TELEVISION

House of Cards

- Season 5 premiers Tuesday on Netflix.
- Creator Beau Willimon has left, leaving veteran writers Melissa James Gibson and Frank Pugliese to take over as showrunners.

MONEY

7 reasons why you should keep a budget

Gail Vaz-Oxlade
For Metro Canada

People always seem to want to debate the validity of a budget. Second only to insurance, budgets are the most misunderstood financial tool around.

People see them as constraining, like a too-tight pair of shoes that pinch and rub. People see them as rigid; think full-body cast. People see them as impossible, as in, "I've made lots of budgets but they never work!"

Budgets do work, and here are seven reasons to have one:

1. A budget is a plan
It's a reflection of your choices for how you will spend your hard-earned money. Without the plan, you're driving down the road with a blindfold on and it's only a matter of time before you run into the ditch.

2. A budget is a gauge
It lets you see if you are living within your means. With easy credit, it is much harder to see that you're not making ends meet because you can fool yourself into thinking you've got it covered. If you have a budget and you faithfully plug your numbers in, the budget will tell you the truth.

3. A budget gives you control
You have dreams of things you'd like to have, places you'd like to go, experiences you'd like to ... well ... experience? With a budget, those dreams and aspirations don't have to go ignored because you keep getting to the end of the money before you get to the end of the month.

4. A budget foresees expenses
Without a budget, people think of most of their less regular expenses as "unexpected." Having forgotten about the car insurance bill that comes once a year, they're shocked and surprised when the bill arrives. With a budget, not only would you know when to expect the bill, you'd have set aside 1/12 of the total each month.

5. A budget keeps you focused
It's a lot harder to spend willy-nilly when you're on a budget because you've accounted for where the money is going down to the last red cent. If you find a category isn't working because there's not enough in it, you have to cut from another category to make the budget balance. But every cent is accounted for.

6. A budget eliminates squabbling
If you're mated to one of those people who have no self-control, a budget can be a relationship rescuer since it will reduce arguments about money, as in, "not until we put it in the budget."

7. A budget reduces stress
Perhaps the biggest benefit reported by people who finally get on a budget is that their stress is way reduced and they find that they sleep better! Following a budget means you eliminate unnecessary worrying over money and debt. You're confident that everything is figured out, and as long as you follow the budget, you've created a plan that will get you to where you want to be.

For more money advice, visit Gail's website at gailvazoxlade.com

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Using farmers to save badgers

CONSERVATION

Endangered creatures rely on the help of farms to live

Owen Roberts
Urban Cowboy

Ontario's 200 endangered badgers are hanging on by a thread. And their habitat — perhaps even their future — depends a great deal on farmers.

Badgers live in burrows around the perimeters of farmers' fields and creeksides. They're common in Western Canada and parts of the U.S., where they're sometimes scorned for leaving holes that can ruin expensive farm equipment.

But not in Ontario. Here, badgers are scarce and elusive.

Biologist Josh Sayers, leader of the Ontario Badger Project, a conservation program to save the grizzled grey creatures, calls them "ghost-like."

Indeed, because they're nocturnal, few people ever see them. Plus, they have a huge range that they move within every few days. One badger around Tillsonburg, Ont., called 80,000 acres home. That encompasses many farms.

"Because badgers' range is so broad, we need farmers to work together to help maintain habitat," says Sayers. "Nearly all of our work takes place on farms. For badgers, agriculture is huge."

Sayers has worked with farmers for eight years to help badgers survive. Through farm visits and through the project's website, he answers questions about these mysterious creatures — their distribution and abundance, habitat, prey (they're carnivores), mortality, and how they fit into the agricultural landscape of southern Ontario.

It's an uneasy existence for badgers here. This is the eastern fringe of their continental range, so they were never very plentiful here to begin with. And it doesn't take much to disrupt their ecosystems, like cities swallowing up Ontario farmland.

That makes farmers' conservation efforts even more important.

But even at the best of times, how do you keep track of 200 badgers in a province the size of Ontario?

Well, besides registering activity such as burrows and sightings (including road kill — see sidebar) Sayers and a handful of others, including researchers at the University of Guelph, have outfitted 10 badgers with small radio transmitters.

Through a dozen motion-activated trail cameras (sorry, no badger cam) strategically placed near known burrows, they monitor the animals' movement.

Such remote surveillance beats trying to follow a badger on foot, from county to county, or meeting one face to face, especially if it feels threatened. Badgers are known for punching above their weight, as seen in the video that went viral of the badger in Utah burying an entire cow carcass.

But despite their ferocity, badgers' future depends on farmers' help with habitat.

And they're getting it.

Over the past 30 years or so, various levels of government and conservation authorities have helped farmers replant thousands of acres of trees, and retire fragile land along creeks, rivers and lakes.

Those measures are vital for food, water and shelter for many wild animals, including badgers.

"There's a very strong and growing ethic in the farm community to appreciate and manage the landscape for biodiversity," says Harold Rudy, executive officer of the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association. "We run a lot of conservation programs and workshops for farmers across Ontario, and they are almost always sold out."

Owen Roberts is an agricultural journalist at the University of Guelph. Follow him on Twitter at @TheUrbanCowboy.

The nocturnal creatures are sometimes scorned in the U.S. for leaving damaging holes. PHOTOS: COURTESY ONTARIO BADGER PROJECT

THE FUTURE *of* FARMING

Badger spotting
Spot a badger burrow on a hike? Call the hotline **1-877-715-9299** (toll-free) or email **info@ontariobadgers.org**. Badger burrows are about 10 inches in diameter and may have claw marks around their entrance. Call, too, if you find one killed on the road. It's better to do this sooner rather than later — before they decompose or become food for scavengers.

Kissin' cousins
Researchers set up Velcro "hair nags" at the top front of suspected badger burrows, to collect hair for DNA analysis. Because badger numbers are so few, studies can identify each badger through such analysis, and determine relationships between them — particularly, how inbreeding might be threatening the species' survival.

Researchers have fitted 10 badgers with radio transmitters before releasing them back into the wild.

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metro SPORTS

The Baseball Hall of Fame presented a plaque to Homer Simpson to honour the 25th anniversary of the Homer at the Bat episode

Cashner slows down Jays

MLB

T.O.'s 5-game streak halted as key faces return to turf

A solid start from Texas right-hander Andrew Cashner brought an end to the suddenly surging Toronto Blue Jays' season-high five-game winning streak.

Cashner (2-4) allowed one run and just five hits over seven innings to help the Rangers (25-26) avoid a sweep with a 3-1 win in front of 46,188 fans at the Rogers Centre on Sunday.

That spoiled the best outing of the season from reliever-turned-starter Joe Biagini (1-3), who threw a career-high 95 pitches and gave up two runs over six innings for the Blue Jays (23-27), who finally have most of their lineup healthy as they wrap the first leg of a 10-game, 10-day homestand.

"I thought he was solid," Blue Jays manager John Gibbons said of Biagini. "We just couldn't get anything going against Cashner."

With recently returned infielders Troy Tulowitzki and Josh Donaldson back in the Blue Jays lineup after a day off, Toronto struck first when Kevin Pillar led off the bottom of the first inning with a double and scored on a Jose Bautista sacrifice fly.

SUNDAY In Toronto

3	1
RANGERS	BLUE JAYS

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

0-8

Josh Donaldson and Troy Tulowitzki were a combined 0 for 8 Sunday but both got a hit in Friday's 7-6 win.

From there, Cashner settled in. The six-foot-six right-hander struck out only two but worked nimbly out of trouble when the Blue Jays managed to threaten, including a fourth inning in which he gave up opening walks to Bautista and Kendrys Morales before grounding Russell Martin into a double play and leaving the inning with only 13 pitches.

"He's been one of the most sought-after arms the last few years in baseball, and one of the best arms in baseball," Gibbons said later. "He used to just be power, power, power. (Now) he can throw anything at any time. He's kind of a master at that."

The Rangers' lineup, meanwhile, was slightly more opportunistic than Toronto's. They tied the game in the third after Elvis Andrus eked out an infield single, advanced to second with his 10th stolen base of the season, and scored on a single to centre from catcher Jonathan Lucroy.

An inning later, Joey Gallo clubbed his 15th home run of the season over the wall in left-centre to give the Rangers a 2-1 lead. After reliever Dominic Leone took the ball for the Blue Jays in the seventh, Texas made it 3-1 when Andrus singled, advanced to third on a Nomar Mazara opposite-way double, and then scored on a wild pitch. THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Spitfires give Windsor Memorial Cup celebration

The Windsor Spitfires are Memorial Cup champions for the third time in franchise history.

Jeremy Bracco capped a three-point effort by setting up Aaron Luchuk's winner early in the third period as the host Spitfires beat the Erie Otters 4-3 on Sunday for the Canadian Hockey League championship. Windsor also won in 2009 and 2010.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Totti, 40, calls it a career after 25 years with Roma

It was a celebration tinged with tears, fear and love.

Francesco Totti bid an emotional farewell to Roma after a remarkable 25-season career with his hometown club on Sunday, contributing to a 3-2 win over Genoa in Serie A that secured the Giallorossi a spot in the Champions League.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dumoulin wins Giro d'Italia

Tom Dumoulin won the 100th Giro d'Italia in dramatic fashion Sunday, reclaiming the overall lead in a final-stage individual time trial.

It's the first Grand Tour victory for the Dutchman Dumoulin.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kisner holds off Spieth to seal victory at Colonial

Kevin Kisner birdied the first three holes on the back nine to take the lead and held on to win at Colonial despite a Sunday charge by defending champion Jordan Spieth.

Kisner shot a 4-under 66 to finish at 10-under 270 in Fort Worth, Texas.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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MAKE IT TODAY

Classy Macerated Strawberry and Mascarpone Mint Parfaits

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

These simple to assemble treats make a special dessert or breakfast.

Ready in 2 hours, 40 minutes
Prep time: 40 minutes
Makes: 6 to 8 parfaits

Ingredients
- 16 oz fresh strawberries, hulled and quartered
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 cup mascarpone cheese
- 2 lemons, zest and juices
- 5 to 7 mint leaves, finely chopped
- 1 Tbsp sugar
- 2 tsp vanilla extract, divided
- 6 full-size graham crackers
- 1 cup oats
- 1/4 cup butter (1/2 stick), melted
- 2 Tbsp brown sugar
- 2 cups whipping cream, plus 2 Tbsp
- 1 tsp lemon zest

Directions

1. Mix the strawberries with sugar and zest and juice of one lemon. Refrigerate at least 2 hours.

2. Mix the mascarpone with lemon juice and zest, reserving 1 teaspoon for whipped cream. Add vanilla and sprinkle in mint. Stir in 1 tablespoon whipping cream. Blend until smooth.

3. Preheat oven to 325. Place graham crackers and oats in a food processor and buzz till like bread crumbs. Transfer to a bowl and mix in melted butter and two tablespoons brown sugar. On a baking sheet lined with parchment paper, spread crumbs out in an even layer. Bake 15 to 20 minutes, or until golden brown. Once cooled, store the crumbs in an airtight container or mason jar.

4. Using a stand mixer or electric hand mixer, mix whipping cream, lemon zest and vanilla until soft peaks form. Scoop into a piping bag.

5. Assembly: In a shallow dessert cup, put about two tablespoons of the graham mixture, two tablespoons of the mascarpone mix, a tablespoon or two of the strawberries, some more mascarpone and then top the whole lot off with some whipped cream and a teeny piece of fresh mint.

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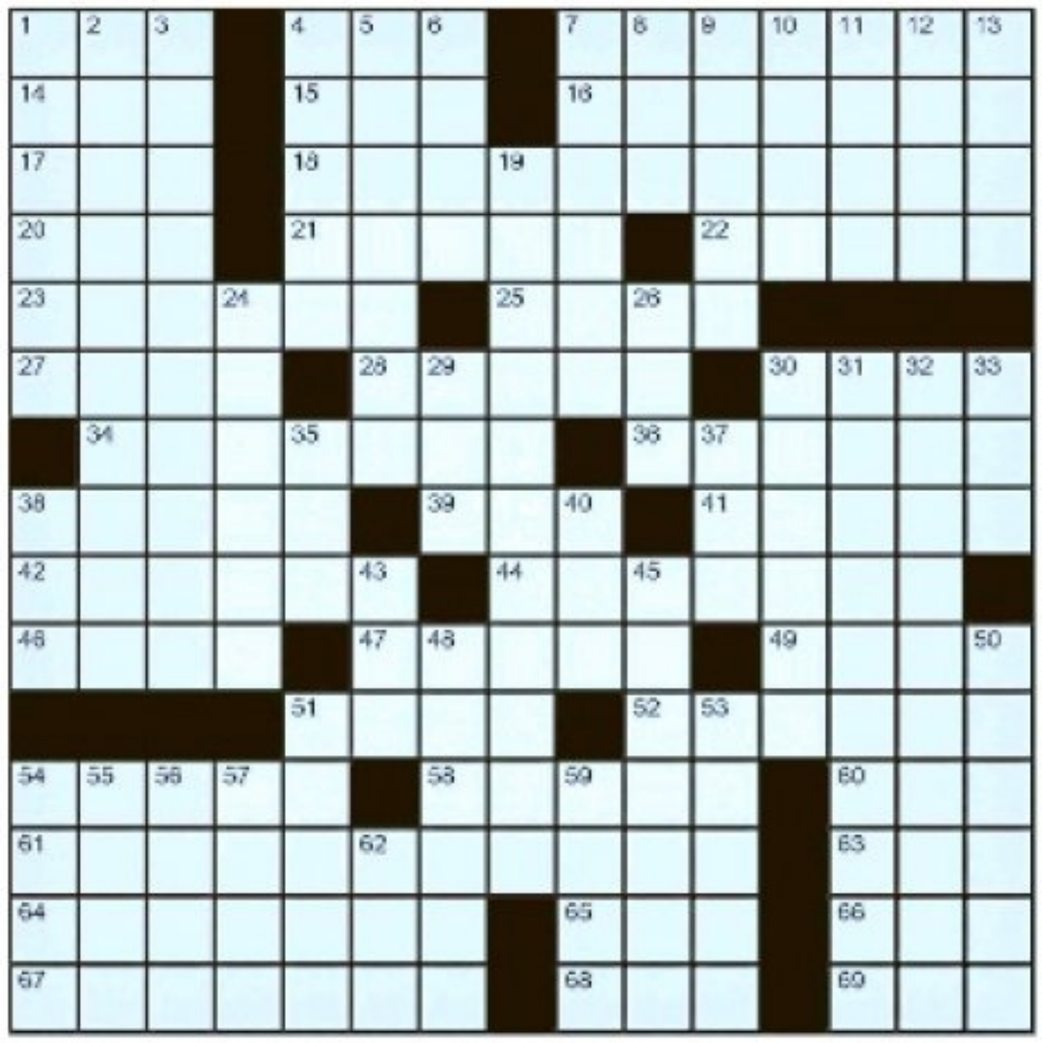
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Inclined
4. Humanities degs.
7. Montreal-born writer Mordecai
14. Thoroughfare topping
15. Qty.
16. Air Canada's in-flight magazine
17. Gladiator's 601
18. Grass emblem of Alberta: 2 wds.
20. US dog org.
21. __ course (Soon enough)
22. Web commerce
23. Hamlet in Alberta north of Grande Prairie
25. Scream
27. Deer Lake's prov.
28. "Long Tall __" by Little Richard
30. Climb
34. Luba hit tune: 3 wds.
36. Blood vessel implants
38. MasterCards rivals
39. Embassy diplomat [abbr.]
41. "Where __ __": Beck hit in 1996
42. "The __" by The Band
44. Double-reed instrument
46. SINs equivalents in The States
47. Humble
49. Ye's antiquated follower
51. Figure skater Johnny
52. Certain cars
54. Hidden hoard
58. Stranger
60. 'Persist' suffix
61. Provincial Park in Ontario sharing the name of the Lake Erie village where it is situated: 2 wds.
63. Marriage notice word
64. Outfits
65. From __ Z
66. Late-summer fair in Toronto [acronym]
67. Sort of red-dish-brown
68. Equivalent word in a thesaurus, for short
69. NFL field measurements

DOWN
1. When the first sunny crack in the day arrives: 2 wds.
2. Total tales: 3 wds.
3. Fills up bit by bit: 2 wds.
4. Comedian/actor Cheech
5. Amidst
6. Particular poker
7. Fix a shoe in a way
8. Like Beethoven's 'Pastoral' symphony, __ Major
9. Angler's basket
10. Party thrower
11. __ Brasi, "The Godfather" (1972) enforcer
12. Needle case
13. Merry dance
19. Bandleader of The Royal Canadians: 2 wds.
24. 'This is owned by me' info providers: 2 wds.
26. Variantly-spelled French lily
29. Range cooker name
30. Do some updating in the workshop
31. Financial woe
32. Emulate spiked hair: 3 wds.
33. Approx.
35. Suffix meaning 'like'
37. Shakespearean contraction
38. 'Das Auto,' cars, briefly
40. __-relief
43. __ Bo (Fitness system)
45. LXX
48. Diagnostic test
50. Makeup maven Ms. Lauder's
51. "What place?"
53. Joe __ (Playwright of What the Butler Saw!)
54. Space sparkler
55. Anti-apartheid activist Desmond
56. __ & Sciences
57. Water __ (Summertime gear)
59. "Buenos __!"
62. However

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
This is a playful, fun-loving day. You will enjoy socializing with others. Sporting events will particularly appeal to you, along with fun activities with children.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
This is more of a personal day for you. You might like to withdraw or retire somewhere quiet, especially your home where you can feel relaxed and protected.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
This is a fast-paced, busy day for you. The upside is that your daily environment is stimulating! You might meet new people and see new situations. You certainly can learn something new.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Money and possessions are a priority for you today. (You're never casual about money.) If out shopping, you will be careful and wise.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Today the Moon is in your sign, boosting your energy and making you more emotional. This happens for two days each month. (Yes, the Moon will be in your sign tomorrow, too.)

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Because you have been high-viz lately (and this will continue this week), use today and tomorrow to catch your breath. Hide somewhere, if you can.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
An interaction with a female friend will be important today. You might want to discuss travel plans or something related to publishing, the media, medicine and the law.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
This is a good day to think about your life's direction in general. What do you see for yourself in the next five years? What about this year?

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
You are the traveller of the zodiac — no question. Today you would love to get away and see someplace different. If you can't, be a tourist in your own city.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Start this week by tying up loose details with taxes, debt, bills, inheritances and shared property. Get some of this stuff out of the way. (You'll love yourself for this later.)

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You will have to go more than halfway when dealing with others, because the Moon is opposite your sign today and tomorrow. This simply requires courtesy and cooperation.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Think about how you can get better organized today so that you feel more on top of your scene this week. Do you have any good ideas?

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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		2				4		
			6					

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4	2	6	1	8	3	7	5	9
3	9	2	4	1	7	5	8	6
7	1	4	6	5	8	9	2	3
6	5	8	2	3	9	4	7	1
9	4	3	8	2	5	1	6	7
8	7	5	9	6	1	2	3	4
2	6	1	3	7	4	8	9	5

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HEADLINE

COFFEE

Many rich returns

Peruvian Café de Monteverde

By: Sean Deasy

Café de Monteverde makes Peru worthy of revisiting for coffee lovers

Certain countries have so much to offer that they're worth exploring again and again. The same can be said for some the world's coffee-producing nations. Peru, for instance, produces some of the planet's best coffee, and is a leader in organically grown beans. And when it comes to flavour, the South American coffee giant is certainly no one-trick pony, yielding vastly different types of beans depending on the region.

Café de Monteverde is a perfect example. Located in Rodriguez de Mendoza in the Amazonas region of northern Peru, this co-op actually produces varietals that include Arabica, Typica, Catimor, Caturra, Pache and Catuai.

And that's within just one region: whatever your Peruvian coffee of choice, it's very much the product of its local origin.

"You have different mountain ranges, different sunlight, different shade, different soil, different rainfalls," says Eric Shabsove of Mountain View Coffee in Toronto, chief curator of the Headline Coffee series. "There are all kinds of different micro-climates throughout the country. All this translates into wonderfully unique taste characteristics. Beans from one farm next to another farm won't necessarily taste the same. That's what's exciting about going back to a country like Peru and trying a different region."

Café de Monteverde's coffees are shade grown at an altitude of 1,400–1,800 meters above sea level. Thanks to the micro-climates particular to Rodriguez de Mendoza, growers can harvest all year long, with increased production between April and December. The harvest begins by selecting mature red cherries to ensure a greater concentration of sugars. Beans are then pulped, washed and fermented (fermentation is typically an 18- to 24-hour process).

The outcome is a bean that creates a smooth and well-balanced coffee. It's exquisite taste—delivering on the promise of a wonderful aroma—is a rich body of brown sugar and refined caramel notes. Café de Monteverde coffee may indeed have the perfect ratio of sweetness to acidity, says Shabsove.

Facts & figures

The Café Monteverde co-op was founded in 1989—comprising 12 families with deep roots in agriculture, conservation and education—to better serve the needs of local coffee producers. That meant striving to improve technical support to farmers, encourage best environmental practices and help its members reach international markets.

The significance of opening that door to wider markets cannot be understated.

Shabsove explains:

"Not that long ago, farmers in this region still had very small farms—perhaps half an acre, or two or three acres of land. And they would pick their harvest, come down from the hills with their donkeys or mules, and they try to sell their coffee to the buyers who would be at the bottom of the hill. Sometimes there might have been only one buyer there." Tragically, says Shabsove, these farmers were typically taken advantage of, simply because there wasn't a consistently reliable source of buyers for their coffee. "And so any price, invariably, would have to be the price they got," he laments. "But with the advent of Café Monteverde, it presented all kinds of advantages including, ultimately, by establishing a fair set price."

Repping the region

Today Café de Monteverde represents several producer organizations, including La Flor del Café, comprised of nearly 300 Fairtrade (FLO) and Organic certified producers. The co-op provides technical assistance and training for its members, financing and marketing services and helps manage the producers' organic and Fairtrade certifications.

It also offers mentorship and training to help farmers manage their resources and enhance their agricultural productivity. Individual meetings occur throughout the year covering topics such as soil conservation, pest management, harvesting and cultivation.

These are tangible benefits for farmers who produce high quality coffee, and that includes the provision and installation of solar drying tables and fermentation tanks. These benefits are real incentives for farmers to continually improve their coffee quality and processing techniques.

Sustainability soars

As part of the co-op's commitment to the environment, Café de Monteverde is assessing projects that would benefit their surrounding land and community. Project proposals include efforts to use more efficient irrigation systems, creating a sanctuary for local flora and fauna and developing better waste management systems.

This is organic coffee production at its best: The co-op is deeply involved with their farmers at every stage, including the planting of seedlings, water conservation, maintenance of soil fertility, organic matter composting and organic methods of pest control.